Valens

(28 March 364 – 9 August 378)

BRIEFING

Valens[c] (/ˈveɪlənz/; Ancient Greek: Ουάλης, romanized: *Ouálēs*; 328 – 9 August 378) was Roman emperor from 364 to 378. Following a largely unremarkable military career, he was named co-emperor by his elder brother Valentinian I, who gave him the eastern half of the Roman Empire to rule. In 378, Valens was defeated and killed at the Battle of Adrianople against the invading Goths, which astonished contemporaries and marked the beginning of barbarian encroachment into Roman territory.

As emperor, Valens continually faced threats both internal and external. He defeated, after some dithering, the usurper Procopius in 366, and campaigned against the Goths across the Danube in 367 and 369. In the following years, Valens focused on the eastern frontier, where he faced the perennial threat of Persia, particularly in Armenia, as well as additional conflicts with the Saracens and Isaurians. Domestically, he inaugurated the Aqueduct of Valens in Constantinople, which was longer than all the aqueducts of Rome. In 376–77, the Gothic War broke out, following a mismanaged attempt to settle the Goths in the Balkans. Valens returned from the east to fight the Goths in person, but lack of coordination with his nephew, the western emperor Gratian (Valentinian I's son), as well as poor battle tactics, led to Valens and much of the eastern Roman army dying in a battle near Adrianople in 378.

A capable administrator who significantly relieved the burden of taxation on the population, Valens is also described as indecisive, impressionable, a mediocre general and overall "utterly undistinguished". His suspicious and fearful disposition resulted in numerous treason trials and executions which heavily stained his reputation. In religious matters, Valens favored a compromise between Nicene Christianity and the various non-trinitarian Christian sects, and interfered little in the affairs of the pagans.

EARLY LIFE AND MILITARY CAREER

Valens and his brother Valentinian were born, in 328 and 321 respectively, to an Illyrian family resident in Cibalae (Vinkovci) in Pannonia Secunda. Their father Gratianus Funarius, a native of Cibalae, had served as a senior officer in the Roman army and as *comes Africae*. The brothers grew up on estates purchased by Gratianus in Africa and Britain. Both were Christians, but favored different sects: Valentinian was a Nicene Christian and Valens was an Arian Christian (specifically a Homoean). In adulthood, Valens served in the *protectores domestici* under the emperors Julian and Jovian. According to the 5th-century Greek historian Socrates Scholasticus, Valens refused pressure to offer pagan sacrifices during the reign of the polytheist emperor Julian.

Julian was killed in battle against the Persians in June 363, and his successor Jovian died the following February while traveling home to Constantinople. The Latin historian Ammianus Marcellinus relates that Valentinian was summoned to Nicaea by a council of military and civil officials, who acclaimed him *augustus* on 25 February 364.

Valentinian appointed his brother Valens *tribunus stabulorum* (or *stabuli*) on 1 March 364. It was the general opinion that Valentinian needed help to handle the administration, civil and military, of the large and unwieldy empire, and, on 28 March, at the express demand of the soldiers for a second *augustus*, he selected Valens as co-emperor at the Hebdomon, before the Constantinian Walls.

REIGN

Both emperors were briefly ill, delaying them in Constantinople (Istanbul). As soon as they recovered, the two *augusti* travelled together through Adrianople and Naissus to Mediana, where they divided their territories. Valens obtained the eastern half of the Empire: Greece, the Balkans, Egypt, Anatolia and the Levant as far as the border with the Sasanian Empire. Valentinian took the western half, where the Alemannic wars required his immediate attention. The brothers began their consulships in their respective capitals, Constantinople and Mediolanum (Milan).
In the summer of 365, the 365 Crete earthquake and ensuing tsunami caused destruction around the Eastern Mediterranean.

The empire had recently retreated from most of its holdings in Mesopotamia and Armenia, because of a treaty that Jovian had made with Shapur II of the Sasanian Empire. Valens' first priority after the winter of 365 was to move east in hopes of shoring up the situation.

Usurpation of Procopius (365 - 366)

Recent tax increases, and Valens' dismissal of Julian's popular minister Salutius, contributed to a general disaffection and to the acceptability of a revolution. With the emperor absent from the imperial city, Procopius, a maternal cousin of Julian, declared himself *augustus* on 28 September 365. Procopius had held office under Constantius II and Julian and was rumored to have been Julian's intended successor, despite how he had died without naming one. Jovian, aside from depriving him of his command, took no measures against this potential rival, but Valentinian regarded Procopius with hostility. Procopius met the danger from the new emperors with his own bid for power, emphasizing his connection to the revered Constantinian Dynasty: during his public appearances he was always accompanied by Constantia, the posthumous daughter of Constantius II, and her mother Faustina, the dowager empress.

News of the revolt reached Valens at Caesarea (Kayseri) in Cappadocia, after most of his troops had already crossed the Cilician Gates into Syria. His first reaction was despair, and he considered abdication and perhaps even suicide. Procopius quickly gained control of the provinces of Asia and Bithynia, winning increasing support for his insurrection. Valens recovered his nerve and sent an army to Constantinople; according to Ammianus Marcellinus, the soldiers defected to Procopius, whose use of his Constantinian hostages had met with some success.

Having reappointed Salutius, Valens dispatched more troops under veteran generals, Arinthaeus and Arbitio, to march on Procopius. According to Ammianus Marcellinus and the later Greek historians Socrates Scholasticus and Sozomen, the forces of Valens eventually prevailed after eight months, defeating Procopius in battles at Thyatira and Nacoleia. On both occasions, Procopius was deserted by his own following in fear of their adversaries' formidable commanders. Put on trial by members of his own escort, Procopius was executed on 27 May 366. Ammianus Marcellinus relates that Procopius' relative Marcellus was proclaimed emperor in his place, but according to Zosimus he was swiftly captured and executed. Valens could turn his attention back to external enemies, the Sasanian Empire and the Goths.

First Gothic War (367 - 369)

During Procopius' insurrection, the Gothic king Ermanaric, who ruled a powerful kingdom north of the Danube from the Euxine to the Baltic Sea, had engaged to supply him with troops for the struggle against Valens. The Gothic army, reportedly numbering 30,000 men, arrived too late to help Procopius, but nevertheless invaded Thrace and began plundering the farms and vineyards of the province. Valens, marching north after defeating Procopius, surrounded them with a superior force and forced them to surrender. Ermanaric protested, and when Valens, encouraged by Valentinian, refused to make atonement to the Goths for his conduct, war was declared.

In spring 367, Valens crossed the Danube and attacked the Visigoths under Athanaric, Ermanaric's tributary. The Goths fled into the Carpathian Mountains, and the campaign ended with no decisive conclusion. The following spring, a Danube flood prevented Valens from crossing; instead the Emperor occupied his troops with the construction of fortifications. In 369, Valens crossed again, from Noviodunum, and by devastating the country forced Athanaric into giving battle. Valens was victorious, and took the title *Gothicus Maximus* in time for the celebration of his *quinquennalia*. Athanaric and his forces were able to withdraw in good order and pleaded for peace.

Fortunately for the Goths, Valens expected a new war with the Sasanid Empire in the Middle East and was therefore willing to come to terms. In early 370 Valens and Athanaric met in the middle of the Danube and agreed to a treaty that ended the war. The treaty seems to have largely cut off relations between Goths and Romans, confining trade and the exchange of troops for tribute.

Persian War of 373

As mentioned before, among Valens' reasons for contracting a hasty and not entirely favorable peace in 369 was the deteriorating state of affairs in the East. Jovian had surrendered Rome's much disputed claim to control over Armenia in 363, and Shapur II was eager to make good on this new opportunity. The Persian emperor began enticing Armenian lords over to his camp and eventually forced the defection of the Arsacid Armenian king, Arshak II (Arsaces II), whom he quickly arrested and incarcerated. The Armenian nobility responded by asking Valens to return Arshak's son, Pap. Valens agreed and sent Pap back to Armenia, but as these events took place during the war with the Goths he could not support him militarily.

In response to the return of Pap, Shapur personally led an invasion force to seize control of Armenia. Pap and his followers took refuge in the mountains while Artaxata, the Armenian capital, and the city of Artogerassa along with several strongholds and castles were destroyed. Shapur sent a second invasion force to Caucasian Iberia to drive out the pro-Roman king Sauromaces II, and put his own appointee, Sauromaces's uncle Aspacures II, on the throne.

In the summer following his Gothic settlement, Valens sent his *magister peditum* (Master of Foot) Arinthaeus to support Pap. The following spring twelve legions were sent under Terentius to regain Iberia and to garrison Armenia near Mount Npat. When Shapur counterattacked into Armenia in 371, his forces were bested by Valens' generals Traianus and Vadomarius and the Armenian *sparapet* (general) Mushegh Mamikonian at Bagavan and Gandzak. Valens had overstepped the 363 treaty and then successfully defended his transgression. A truce settled after the 371 victory held as a quasi-peace for the next five years while Shapur was forced to deal with a Kushan invasion on his eastern frontier.

Meanwhile, troubles broke out with the boy-king Pap, who purportedly had the Armenian patriarch Nerses assassinated and demanded control of a number of Roman cities, including Edessa. Controversy also ensued over the issue of the appointment of a new patriarch of Armenia, with Pap appointing a candidate without the traditional approval from Caesarea.

Pressed by his generals and fearing that Pap would defect to the Persians, Valens made an unsuccessful attempt to capture the prince and later had him executed inside Armenia. In his stead, Valens imposed another Arsacid, Varazdat, who ruled under the regency of the *sparapet* Mushegh Mamikonian, a friend of Rome.

None of this sat well with the Persians, who began agitating again for compliance with the 363 treaty. As the eastern frontier heated up in 375, Valens began preparations for a major expedition. Meanwhile, trouble was brewing elsewhere. In Isauria, the mountainous region of western Cilicia, a major revolt had broken out in 375 which diverted troops formerly stationed in the East. Furthermore, by 377, the Saracens under Queen Mavia had broken into revolt and devastated a swath of territory stretching from Phoenicia and Palestine as far as the Sinai. Though Valens successfully brought both uprisings under control, the opportunities for action on the eastern frontier were limited by these skirmishes closer to home.

Valens became the senior *augustus* on 17 November 375, after his older brother Valentinian died suddenly at Brigetio (Szőny) while on campaign against the Quadi in Pannonia. In the west, Valentinian was succeeded by his elder son Gratian, co-emperor since 367, and his younger son Valentinian II, whom the army on the Danube proclaimed *augustus* without consulting Gratian or Valens.

Gothic War Renewed

Valens' eastern campaign required an ambitious recruitment program, designed to fill gaps left in his mobile forces when troops were transferred to the Western Empire in 374. Meanwhile, migrations of the Huns began to displace the Goths, who sought Roman protection. Refugees from the former kingdom of Ermanaric, unable to hold the Dniester or Prut rivers against Hunnic invaders, retreated southward in a massive emigration, seeking more defensible lands on the Roman side of the Danube. In 376, the Visigoths under their leader Fritigern advanced to the far shores of the lower Danube and sent requests for asylum to Valens in Antioch.

Valens granted permission for a Danube crossing to Fritigern and his followers, who had allied with the Romans in the 370s against Athanaric's persecution of Gothic Christians, and, it was hoped, could now be hired to bolster the eastern army. The Gothic troops would have to be paid in gold or silver, but their presence would decrease Valens' dependence on conscription from the provinces—thereby increasing revenues from the recruitment tax. Though a number of Gothic groups apparently requested entry, Valens granted admission only to Fritigern's people. Others would soon follow, however.

Valens' mobile forces were tied down on the Persian frontier, where the emperor was attempting to withdraw from the harsh terms imposed by Shapur and was meeting some resistance on the latter's part. This meant that only *limitanei* units were present to oversee the arrival of Fritigern and his Goths, to the number of 200,000 warriors and almost a million all told. The sparse imperial troops could not stop subsequent Danube crossings by groups of Ostrogoths, Huns, and Alans, none of whom had been included in the original treaty. The controlled resettlement foreseen by the government threatened to turn into a major invasion, and the situation was worsened by corruption in the local Roman administration. Valens' generals accepted bribes rather than depriving the Goths of their weapons as Valens had stipulated, then enraged the settlers by imposing exorbitant prices for food.[65] In early 377, the Goths revolted after a commotion with the people of Marcianopolis, and defeated the corrupt Roman governor Lupicinus near the city at the Battle of Marcianople.

After joining forces with the Ostrogoths under Alatheus and Saphrax who had crossed without Valens' consent, the combined barbarian group spread out to devastate the country before combining to meet Roman advance forces under Traianus and Richomeres. In a sanguinary battle at *Ad Salices*, the Goths were momentarily checked, and Saturninus, now Valens' lieutenant in the province, undertook a strategy of hemming them in between the lower Danube and the Euxine, hoping to starve them into surrender. However, Fritigern forced him to retreat by inviting some of the Huns to cross the river in the rear of Saturninus' ranged defenses. The Romans then fell back, incapable of containing the irruption, though with an elite force of his best soldiers the general Sebastian was able to fall upon and destroy several of the smaller predatory bands.

Valens requested assistance in Thrace from his nephew and co-emperor Gratian, but ultimately took the offensive before Gratian could join him. Leaving behind a skeletal force—some of them Goths—the eastern army withdrew from the frontier, reaching Constantinople by 30 May, 378. The imperial councillors, *comes* Richomeres, the generals Frigeridus and Victor, and letters from Gratian all cautioned Valens to wait for the arrival of the western army, but the populace of Constantinople became impatient at the delay. Public opinion criticized Valens for failing to control the Goths after inviting them into his territory, and compared him unfavourably with Gratian as a military commander. Valens decided to advance at once and win a victory on his own.

THE GOTHIC WAR

The Gothic War of 376–382 was one of several Gothic Wars in Roman history in which the Goths fought against the Roman Empire. This particular conflict included the catastrophic Roman defeat at the Battle of Adrianople, which is commonly seen as a cause of the decline of the Western Roman Empire, although its significance is widely debated.

Background

In the summer of 376, a massive number of Goths arrived on the Danube River, the border of the Roman Empire, requesting asylum from the Huns. There were two groups: the Thervings led by Fritigern and Alavivus and the Greuthungi led by Alatheus and Saphrax. Eunapius states their number as 200,000 including civilians, but Peter Heather estimates that the Thervings may have had only 10,000 warriors and 50,000 people in total, with the Greuthungi about the same size. *The Cambridge Ancient History* places modern estimates at around 90,000 people.

Noel Lenski accepts Eunapius' number as approximating the total population of migrants who joined forces against the Romans in the first year (including Thervings and Greuthungi, but also some Taifali, Alans and Huns), which population could have fielded a fighting force of 40,000-50,000 warriors.
The Goths sent ambassadors to Valens, the Eastern Roman emperor, requesting permission to settle their people inside the Empire. It took them some time to arrive, for the Emperor was in Antioch preparing for a campaign against the Sasanian Empire over control of Armenia and Iberia. The bulk of his forces were stationed in the East, far away from the Danube. Ancient sources are unanimous that Valens was pleased at the appearance of the Goths, as it offered the opportunity of new soldiers at low cost. With Valens committed to action on the Eastern frontier, the appearance of a large number of barbarians meant his skeleton force in the Balkans were outnumbered. Valens must have appreciated the danger when he gave the Thervings permission to enter the empire and the terms he gave them were highly favorable. This was not the first time barbarian tribes had been settled; the usual course was that some would be recruited into the army and the rest would be broken up into small groups and resettled across the empire at the Emperor's discretion. This would keep them from posing a unified threat and assimilate them into the greater Roman population. The agreement differed with the Thervings by allowing them to choose the place of their settlement, Thrace, and allowed them to remain united. The group of Thervings under the leaders named Alavivus and Fritigern were favored for crossing since their group had already allied with Valens and converted to Christianity in the wake of a civil war among the Thervings after 370. The Therving leader Athanaric, who had confronted Valens in his Gothic War of 367-369 was denied entry, as were the Greuthungi, against whom the Roman army and naval forces blocked the river to deny their crossing.

The Thervings were probably allowed to cross at or near the fortress of Durostorum. They were ferried by the Romans in boats, rafts and in hollowed tree-trunks; Ammianus Marcellinus remarks bitterly that "diligent care was taken that no future destroyer of the Roman state should be left behind, even if he were smitten by a fatal disease". Even so, the river swelled with rain and many drowned. The Goths were to have their weapons confiscated but, whether because the Romans in charge accepted bribes, the Romans did not have the manpower to check all of the incoming warriors, or warriors recruited into the Roman army would need their own arms, many Goths were allowed to retain their weapons. The Romans placed the Thervings along the southern bank of the Danube in Lower Mœsia as they waited for the land allocations to begin. In the interim, the Roman state was to provide them food.

Breakout

So many people in such a small area caused a food shortage and the Thervings began to starve. Roman logistics could not cope with the vast numbers, and officials under the command of Lupicinus simply sold off much of the food before it reached the hands of the Goths. Desperate, Gothic families sold many of their children into slavery to Romans for dog meat at the price of one child per one dog.

This treatment caused the Therving Goths to grow rebellious and Lupicinus decided to move them south to Marcianople, his regional headquarters. To guard the march south, Lupicinus was forced to pull out the Roman troops guarding the Danube, which allowed the Greuthungi promptly to cross into Roman territory. The Thervings then deliberately slowed their march to allow the Greuthungi to catch up. As the Thervings approached Marcianople, Lupicinus invited Fritigern, Alavivus and a small group of their attendants to dine with him inside the city. The bulk of the Goths were encamped some distance outside, with Roman troops between them and the city. Due to the persistent refusal of the Roman soldiers to allow the Goths to buy supplies in the town's market, fighting broke out and several Roman soldiers were killed and robbed. Lupicinus, having received the news as he sat at the banquet with the Gothic leaders, ordered Fritigern and Alavivus held hostage and their retainers executed. When news of the killings came to the Goths outside, they prepared to assault Marcianople. Fritigern advised Lupicinus that the best way to calm the situation was to allow him to rejoin his people and show them that he was still alive. Lupicinus agreed and set him free. Alavivus is not mentioned again in the sources and his fate is unknown.

Having survived the chaos of the night and the earlier humiliations, Fritigern and the Thervings decided it was time to break the treaty and rebel against the Romans, and the Greuthungi immediately joined them. Fritigern led the Goths away from Marcianople towards Scythia. Lupicinus and his army pursued them 14 km (8.7 mi) from the city, fought the Battle of Marcianople and were annihilated. All the junior officers were killed, the military standards were lost and the Goths secured new weapons and armor from the dead Roman soldiers. Lupicinus survived and escaped back to Marcianople. The Thervings then raided and pillaged throughout the region.

At Adrianople a small Gothic force employed by the Romans was garrisoned under the command of Sueridus and Colias, who were themselves Goths. When they received news of the events they decided to remain in place "considering their own welfare the most important thing of all." The Emperor, afraid of having a Roman garrison under Gothic control so close to a Gothic rebellion, ordered Sueridus and Colias to march east to Hellespontus. The two commanders asked for food and money for the journey, as well as a postponement of two days to prepare. The local Roman magistrate, angry at this garrison for having earlier pillaged his suburban villa, armed people from the city and stirred them against the garrison. The mob demanded that the Goths follow orders and leave immediately. The men under Sueridus and Colias initially stood still but when they were pelted with curses and missiles from the mob, attacked and killed many. The Gothic garrison left the city and joined Fritigern, and the Goths besieged Adrianople. But lacking the equipment and the experience to conduct a siege and losing many men to missiles, they abandoned the city. Fritigern declared he now "kept peace with walls". The Goths once again dispersed to loot the rich and undefended countryside. Using prisoners and Roman traitors, the Goths were led to hidden hoards, rich villages and such places.

> *For without distinction of age or sex all places were ablaze with slaughter and great fires, sucklings were torn from the very breasts of their mothers and slain, matrons and widows whose husbands had been killed before their eyes were carried off, boys of tender or adult age were dragged away over the dead bodies of their parents. Finally many aged men, crying that they had lived long enough after losing their possessions and their beautiful women, were led into exile with their arms pinioned behind their backs and weeping over the glowing ashes of their ancestral homes.*

Containing the Goths

Many Goths inside Roman territory joined Fritigern, as did assorted slaves, miners and prisoners. Roman garrisons in fortified towns held out but those outside of them were easy prey. The Goths created a vast wagon train to hold all the loot and supplies pillaged from the Roman countryside and they had much rage against the Roman population for what they had endured. Those who had started as starving refugees had transformed into a powerful army.

Valens, now recognizing the seriousness of the situation from his base in Antioch, sent general Victor to negotiate a peace with the Sassanids. He also began to transfer the Eastern Roman army to Thrace. While the main army mobilized, he sent ahead an advance force under Traianus and Profuturus. Valens also reached out to the Western Roman emperor Gratian, his co-emperor and nephew, for aid. Gratian responded by sending the *comes domesticorum* Ricomer and the *comes rei militaris* Frigeridus to guard the western passes through the Haemus mountains with their soldiers. The aim was to contain the Goths from spreading westward and for the two forces to join up eventually with the East Roman army. These huge movements of troops and the cooperation of the West spoke to the grave threat the Goths posed.

Traianus and Profuturus arrived leading troops of Armenians, but Frigeridus, leading the Pannonian and the transalpine auxiliaries, fell ill from gout. Ricomer, having led a force cut from Gratian's palatine army, took command of the combined forces by the mutual consent of the other leaders, probably at Marcianople. The Goths withdrew north of the Haemus mountains, and the Romans moved to engage. At a place called Ad Salices ("The Willows"), they fought the Battle of the Willows. The Romans were outnumbered, and during the battle, their left wing began to collapse. Only with hasty reinforcements and Roman discipline was the situation retrieved. The battle lasted until dusk, when the opposing armies ceased combat and left the field. The Goths withdrew into their wall of wagons, leaving the battle a bloody draw. Both sides counted heavy losses, including Profuturus, who was slain on the battlefield.

After the battle, the Romans retreated to Marcianople, and the Goths of Fritigern spent seven days within their wagon fort before moving out. Frigeridus destroyed and enslaved a band of marauding Goths under Farnobius and sent the survivors to Italy. That autumn, Ricomer returned to Gaul to collect more troops for the next year's campaign. Valens meanwhile sent soldiers under *magister equitum* Saturninus to Thrace to join up with Traianus. Saturninus and Traianus erected a line of forts in the Haemus passes to block the Goths. The Romans hoped to weaken the enemy with the rigors of winter and starvation and then lure Fritigern into open battle on the plains between the Haemus mountains and the Danube to finish him off. The Goths, once again hungry and desperate, tried to break through the passes but were repulsed each time. Fritigern then enlisted the aid of mercenary Huns and Alans, who boosted his strength. Saturninus, realizing he could no longer hold the passes against them, abandoned the blockade and retreated. The Goths were thus free to raid anew, reaching as far as the Rhodope Mountains and the Hellespont.

> *Then there were to be seen and to lament acts most frightful to see and to describe: women driven along by cracking whips and stupefied with fear, still heavy with their unborn children, which before coming into the world endured many horrors; little children too clinging to their mothers. Then could be heard the laments of high-born boys and maidens, whose hands were fettered in cruel captivity. Behind these were led last of all grown-up girls and chaste wives, weeping and with downcast faces, longing even by a death of torment to forestall the imminent violation of their modesty. Among these was a freeborn man, not long ago rich and independent, dragged along like some wild beast and railing at thee, Fortune, as merciless and blind, since thou hadst in a brief moment deprived him of his possessions and of the sweet society of his dear ones; had driven him from his home, which he saw fallen to ashes and ruins and sacrificed him to a bloody victor, either to be torn from limb to limb or amid blows and tortures to serve as a slave.*

The Goths, joined by their new allies the Huns and Alans, travelled south in search of plunder and close to the city of Deultum won the Battle of Deultum destroying most of the Eastern Roman army and the city. Barzimeres, tribunum scutariorum (Commander of the Guards), was killed and Equitius, cura palatii (Marshal of the Court), was captured. The Goths marched on Augusta Trajana to attack the general Frigiderus but his scouts detected the invaders and he promptly withdrew to Illyria but the city was also destroyed. Equitius later managed to escape from captivity.

Archaeological finds in this region and dated to this period reveal Roman villas with signs of abandonment and deliberate destruction. The devastation forced Valens to officially reduce taxes on the populations of Mœsia and Scythia.

The Beginning of the End

According to the Latin historians Ammianus Marcellinus and Paulus Orosius, on 9 August 378, Valens and most of his army were killed fighting the Goths near Hadrianopolis in Thrace (Adrianople, Edirne). Ammianus is the primary source for the battle.

Valens opened the campaign with arrangements aimed at building his troop strength and gaining a toehold in Thrace, then moved out to Adrianople, from whence he marched against the confederated barbarian army. Although negotiations were attempted, these broke down when a Roman unit sallied forth and carried both sides into battle. Valens had left a sizeable guard with his baggage and treasures, depleting his force. His right cavalry wing arrived at the Gothic camp sometime before the left wing arrived. It was a very hot day and the Roman cavalry was engaged without strategic support, wasting its efforts and suffering in the heat.

Meanwhile, Fritigern once again sent an emissary of peace in his continued manipulation of the situation. The resultant delay meant that the Romans present on the field began to succumb to the heat. The army's resources were further diminished when an ill-timed attack by the Roman archers made it necessary to recall Valens' emissary, *comes* Richomeres. The archers were beaten and retreated in humiliation. Returning from foraging to find the battle in full swing, Gothic cavalry under the command of Alatheus and Saphrax now struck and, in what was probably the most decisive event of the battle, the Roman cavalry fled.

From here, Ammianus gives two accounts of Valens' demise. In the first account, Ammianus states that Valens was "mortally wounded by an arrow, and presently breathed his last breath" (XXXI.12). His body was never found or given a proper burial. In the second account, Ammianus states the Roman infantry was abandoned, surrounded and cut to pieces. Valens was wounded and carried to a small wooden hut. He died when the Goths, evidently unaware of the prize within, set the hut on fire (XXXI.13.14–16).

A third, apocryphal, account states that Valens was struck in the face by a Gothic dart and then perished while leading a charge. He wore no helmet, in order to encourage his men. This action turned the tide of the battle which resulted in a tactical victory but a strategic loss. The church historian Socrates likewise gives two accounts for the death of Valens.

> *Some have asserted that he was burnt to death in a village whither he had retired, which the barbarians assaulted and set on fire. But others affirm that having put off his imperial robe he ran into the midst of the main body of infantry; and that when the cavalry revolted and refused to engage, the infantry were surrounded by the barbarians, and completely destroyed in a body. Among these it is said the Emperor fell, but could not be distinguished, in consequence of his not having on his imperial habit.*

When the battle was over, two-thirds of the eastern army lay dead. Many of their best officers had also perished. What was left of the army of Valens was led from the field under the cover of night by *comes* Richomeres and general Victor.

J. B. Bury, a noted historian of the period, provides a specific interpretation on the significance of the battle: it was "a disaster and disgrace that need not have occurred."

For Rome, the battle incapacitated the government. Emperor Gratian, nineteen years old, was unable to deal with the catastrophe, until he appointed Theodosius I. The total defeat cost the administration important precious metal resources, as bullion had been centralized with the imperial court. Valens was deified by *consecratio* as Latin: *Divus Valens*, lit. 'the Divine Valens'.

The Goths Take Over

Although Valens had completed negotiations with the Persians earlier in 377, he had been forced to remain on the Eastern frontier for the rest of the year because of a major uprising by the Saracens affecting provinces from Phoenice south as far as Egypt. Valens finally extracted himself from the Eastern front in early 378 and arrived with most of his army in Constantinople on 30 May 378. His entry into the city caused small riots against him. According to the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Socrates Scholasticus, the citizens of the capital accused Emperor Valens of neglecting their defense, exposing them to the raids of the Goths who now threatened Constantinople itself and urged him to leave the city and confront the invaders instead of continuing to delay. Valens initially used Saracen auxiliaries newly recruited at the close of his recent war with them to begin clearing Gothic raiders from the outskirts of Constantinople. After twelve days he was able to leave the city and moved with his army to his imperial villa Melanthias, west of Constantinople, on 12 June. There he distributed pay, supplies and speeches to his soldiers to boost morale.
Blaming Traianus for the bloody draw at The Willows, Valens demoted him and appointed Sebastianus, who had arrived from Italy, to command and organize the Eastern Roman army. Sebastianus set out with a small force, drawn from the Emperor's own Scholae Palatinae, to engage separated Gothic raiding bands. He went first to Adrianople and such was the fear of the roving Goths, the city needed much persuasion to open its gates to him. After this, Sebastianus scored a few small victories. In one instance, he waited until nightfall to ambush a sleeping Gothic warband along the river Hebrus and slaughtered most of them. The loot Sebastianus brought back was, according to Ammianus, too much for Adrianople to hold. Sebastianus' success convinced Fritigern to recall his raiding parties to the area of Cabyle, lest they be picked off piecemeal.

Western Roman Emperor Gratian had meant to join up with Valens' army but events in the West detained him. First there was an invasion by the Lentienses into Gaul in February 378, which Gratian defeated at the battle of Argentovaria. Then intelligence came from the other side of the Rhine warning of barbarian preparations for more invasions. This forced Gratian to preemptively cross the river himself and bring the situation under control as he successfully defeated the Alemanni. This took time however, and it was not until August that Gratian sent a message declaring his victories and his imminent arrival. Noel Lenski has argued that Gratian's delays in moving eastward to support his uncle can in part be attributed to a rivalry between the two detectable in various sources. Valens, who had been impatiently waiting since June for the Western Roman army, was envious of the glory of his nephew and that of Sebastianus, so when he heard that the Goths were moving south towards Adrianople, Valens decamped his army and marched there to head them off. Roman scouting erroneously reported that the Goths, who were seen raiding near Nika, numbered only 10,000 fighting men. Around 7 August Ricomer returned from the West with the Western armies' advanced guard and a new message: Gratian was nearing the Succi pass which led to Adrianople and he advised his uncle to wait for him. Valens called a council of war to decide the issue. According to Ammianus, Sebastianus advocated for an immediate assault upon the Goths and that Victor cautioned to wait for Gratian. According to Eunapius, Sebestianus said they should wait. In any case, the council and Valens decided to attack immediately, egged on by court flatterers of the easy victory to come.

The Goths sent envoys led by a Christian priest to the Romans to negotiate on the night of 8 August. With them Fritigern sent two letters. The first stipulated that the Goths only wanted lands in Thrace and in exchange would ally themselves to the Romans. The second letter, privately addressed to Valens, said that Fritigern truly wanted peace but the Romans would have to stay mobilized so that he could enforce the peace on his own people. Whether Fritigern was earnest or not is unknown, as Valens rejected the proposal. On the morning of 9 August, Valens left his treasury, imperial seal and civilian officials in Adrianople and marched north to engage the Goths. At around two in the afternoon the Romans came within sight of the Gothic wagon fort. Unlike the Romans, the Goths were well rested and the two sides drew up into battle formations. Fritigern sent more peace envoys and had long since sent for the aid of the Greuthungi cavalry under Alatheus and Saphrax who were separated from the main Gothic body. These remained undetected by Roman scouts.

The Eastern Roman army withered under the hot summer sun and the Goths lit fires to blow smoke and ash into the Roman formations. Valens reconsidered the peace offer and was preparing to send Ricomer to meet with Fritigern when two Roman elite Scholae Palatinae units, the Scutarii under Cassio and the Sagittarii under Bacurius, engaged the Goths without orders. This forced the Battle of Adrianople to begin. As the armies engaged, the Greuthungi and Alan cavalry arrived and swung the battle in favor of the Goths. The Roman left flank was surrounded and destroyed and a rout began all along the lines which became a bloodbath for the Roman forces. They were so tightly packed they could not maneuver and some could not lift their arms at all. Few managed to run.

> *And so the barbarians, their eyes blazing with frenzy, were pursuing our men, in whose veins the blood was chilled with numb horror: some fell without knowing who struck them down, others were buried beneath the mere weight of their assailants; some were slain by the sword of a comrade; for though they often rallied, there was no ground given, nor did anyone spare those who retreated. Besides all this, the roads were blocked by many who lay mortally wounded, lamenting the torment of their wounds; and with them also mounds of fallen horses filled the plains with corpses. To these ever irreparable losses, so costly to the Roman state, a night without the bright light of the moon put an end.*

Sebastianus, Traianus, tribune Aequitius and thirty-five senior officers had been slain, while Ricomer, Victor and Saturninus had escaped. Two-thirds of the Eastern Roman army lay dead upon the field. The total manpower loss may have been as high as 26,000 of an original force of 40,000. There are conflicting stories as to what happened to the Emperor himself. One claims that he was wounded and dragged off the field by some of his men to a farmhouse. The Goths approached it and were shot at with arrows, which caused the Goths to burn it down with the Emperor inside. The other report states Valens was slain in combat on the field with his army. Whatever happened, his body was never found.

The Goths, invigorated by their incredible victory, besieged Adrianople but the city resisted. Its walls were strengthened, huge stones were placed behind the gates and arrows, stones, javelins and artillery rained down upon the attackers. The Goths lost men but made no progress. So they resorted to trickery: they ordered some Roman traitors to pretend to be fleeing from the Goths and infiltrate the city, where they were to set fires to allow the Goths, while the citizens were busy putting the fires out, to attack the undefended walls. The plan did not work. The Roman traitors were welcomed into the city but when their stories did not match, they were imprisoned and tortured. They confessed to the trap and were beheaded. The Goths launched another assault but it too failed. With this final defeat, the Goths gave up and marched away. They together with some Huns and Alans went first to Perinthus and then to Constantinople. There they were fended off in the small battle of Constantinople with the help of the city's Arab garrison. At one moment, an Arab dressed only in a loincloth rushed forward against the Goths, slit one of their throats and sucked out the blood. This terrified the Goths and combined with the immense size of the city and its walls, they decided to march off once again to plunder the countryside.

With Valens dead, the Eastern Roman Empire had to operate without an Emperor. The *magister militum* of the East, Julius, feared the Gothic populations elsewhere in the Eastern Roman Empire, both civilians and those Goths serving within army units across the Empire. After the events of Adrianople, they could ally themselves to Fritigern and spread the crisis to even more provinces. Julius therefore had those Goths near the frontier lured together and massacred. By 379, word reached the Goths in the interior provinces of the massacres and some rioted, especially in Asia Minor. The Romans put down the riots and slaughtered the Goths in those places as well, both innocent and guilty.

THE BATTLE OF ADRIANOPLE

The **Battle of Adrianople** also known as **Battle of Hadrianopolis** was fought between the Eastern Roman army led by the Roman emperor Valens and Gothic rebels (largely Thervings as well as Greutungs, non-Gothic Alans, and various local rebels) led by Fritigern. The battle took place on 9 August 378 in the vicinity of Adrianople, in the Roman province of Thracia (modern Edirne in European Turkey). It ended with an overwhelming victory for the Goths and the death of Emperor Valens

As part of the Gothic War of 376–382, the battle is often considered the start of the events which led to the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century.

A detailed contemporary account of the lead-up to the battle from the Roman perspective was written by Ammianus Marcellinus and forms the culminating point at the end of his history.

Background

In 376, the Goths, led by Alavivus and Fritigern, asked to be allowed to settle in the Eastern Roman Empire after being displaced by the invasions of the Huns. Hoping that they would become farmers and soldiers, the Eastern Roman emperor Valens allowed them to establish themselves in the Empire as allies (*foederati*). Once across the Danube and into Roman territory, however, the dishonesty of the Roman provincial commanders Lupicinus and Maximus led the newcomers to revolt after suffering many hardships.

Valens then asked Gratian, the western emperor, for reinforcements to fight the Goths. Gratian sent the general Frigeridus with reinforcements, as well as the leader of his guards, Richomeres. For the next two years preceding the Battle of Adrianople there were a series of running battles with no clear victories for either side.

In 378, Valens decided to take control himself and assembled additional troops from his own resources in Syria and from the reserves of the Western Roman Empire in Gaul.

Valens left Antioch for Constantinople, and arrived on 30 May. He appointed Sebastianus, newly arrived from Italy, to reorganize the Roman armies already in Thrace. Sebastianus picked 2,000 of his legionaries and marched towards Adrianople. Along the way, they came upon and ambushed small detachments of Goths. Fritigern as the leader of the Goths assembled his forces at Nicopolis and Beroe (now Stara Zagora) in order to deal with the Roman threat.

At the time, much of Gratian's army was in Pannonia where they were in the interim attacked across the Rhine by the Lentienses (part of the Alamanni). After the Romans regrouped and defeated the Lentienses near Argentaria (near modern-day Colmar, France), Gratian's army traveled east partly by sea and partly overland.

Upon learning of Sebastianus's success against the Goths and of Gratian's victory over the Lentienses, Valens was more than ready for a victory of his own. To link up with Sebastianus's forces before confronting the Goths, Valens moved his army from Melantias to Adrianople. On 6 August, reconnaissance informed Valens that approximately 10,000 Goths were advancing toward Adrianople from a position 25 kilometers to the north. In preparation at Adrianople, Valens fortified his camp with both ditches and ramparts.

Richomeres, sent in advance to Adrianople by Gratian, carried a letter asking Valens to wait for his arrival with reinforcements before engaging in battle. Valens' officers also recommended that he wait for Gratian, but Valens decided to fight without waiting, ready to claim the ultimate prize.

The Goths were also watching the Romans, and on 8 August, Fritigern sent an emissary to propose peace and an alliance in exchange for Roman territory. Sure that he would be victorious due to his supposed numerical superiority, Valens rejected these proposals. Valens' estimates of manpower, however, neglected to take into consideration part of the Gothic cavalry that had gone extended distances to forage.

Composition of the Roman Troops

Valens' army may have included troops from three Roman field armies: the Army of Thrace, based in the eastern Balkans, which may have sustained heavy losses in 376–377; the 1st Army in the Emperor's Presence; and the 2nd Army in the Emperor's Presence. Both armies in the Emperor's Presence were normally based at Constantinople in peacetime but had been committed to the Persian frontier in 376 and sent west in 377–378.

Valens' army included units of veterans, men accustomed to war. The entire force consisted of seven legions – among which were the Legio I *Maximiana*[*citation needed*] and imperial auxiliaries – of 700 to 1000 men each. The cavalry was composed of mounted archers (*sagittarii*) and *Scholae* (the imperial guard).

Ammianus Marcellinus makes references to the following forces under Valens:

- Legions of Lanciarii, and Mattiarii. The Notitia Dignitatum lists both as legiones palatinae. Some claim that the Mattiarii may have been allied forces. However, mattiarii may refer to mace-armed infantry (mattea being Latin for mace). Valens is referred to as seeking protection with the Lanciarii and Mattiarii as the other Roman forces collapsed (apparently a sign of how desperate the battle had become). Eventually they were unable to hold off the Goths.

- A battalion of Batavians; they were apparently held in reserve and fled, given a reference to a comes named Victor attempting to bring them up into battle but unable to find them.

- Scutarii (shielded cavalry) and archers. As one or both were under the command of Bacurius the Iberian, these may have been allied auxiliary troops from Caucasian Iberia (part of modern Georgia) rather than Roman proper.

He also refers to the following officers:

- Ricomer, Frankish Comes of Gratian's Domestici (the corps of bodyguards of the emperor who were stationed in the imperial palace) sent to assist Valens in 376. He offered to act as a hostage to facilitate negotiations when Equitus refused. He survived the battle, indicated due to retreating.

- Sebastianus, arrived from Italy previously, and clearly operating as one of Valens' generals. Killed in the battle.

- Victor, master-general of the cavalry, a Sarmatian by birth, who led the officers counselling waiting for Gratian.

- Equitius, a relation of Valens, a tribune and high steward of the palace. He refused to act as a hostage, as he had been a prisoner of the Goths in Dibaltum and escaped, and now feared revenge. Killed in the battle.

- Bacurius (presumably Romanised Bakur), a native and possibly prince of Iberia, in command of the archers and/or scutarii with Cassio that accompanied Ricimer as hostage, and who attacked without orders.

- Traianus, apparently in command of Roman forces before Valens assumed command, who was described as an illustrious man whose death in the battle was a great loss. He was supposedly still alive when Valens sought refuge with the Lanciarii and Mattiarii.

- Victor, the comes who tried to bring the Batavian reserve battalion into action.

- Cassio, in command of the archers and/or scutarii accompanying Ricimer as hostage.

- Saturninus, magister militum vacans, referred to as being able to stay alive by retreating.

- Valerianus, Master of the Stable. Killed in battle.

- Potentius, tribune of the Promoti, a branch of the cavalry, son of Ursicinus, former commander of the forces. He "fell in the flower of his age, a man respected by all persons of virtue."

- Thirty five tribunes, including those of units and those of the staff, who were killed. Presumably there were more than this, but who survived.

Several modern historians have attempted to estimate the strength of Valens' army.

Warren Treadgold estimates that, by 395, the Army of Thrace had 24,500 soldiers, while the 1st and 2nd Armies in Emperor's Presence had 21,000 each. However, all three armies include units either formed (several units of *Theodosiani* among them) or redeployed (various legions in Thrace) after Adrianople. Moreover, troops were needed to protect Marcianopolis and other threatened cities, so it is unlikely that all three armies fought together.

Some modern historians estimated the real number of Roman troops to be as many as 15,000 men, 10,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry.

It is not possible to precisely list the units of the Roman army at Adrianople. The only sources are Ammianus, who describes the battle but mentions few units by name, and the eastern *Notitia Dignitatum*, which lists Roman army units in the late 4th to early 5th century, after Theodosius. Many units listed in the Balkans were formed after Adrianople; others were transferred from other parts of the Empire, before or after Adrianople; others are listed in two or more sectors. Some units at Adrianople may have been merged or disbanded due to their losses. The Roman forces consisted of heavy infantry, various archers and cavalry.

Composition of the Gothic Forces

There were probably two main Gothic armies south of the Danube. Fritigern led one army, largely recruited from the Therving exiles, while Alatheus and Saphrax led another army, largely recruited from the Greuthung exiles.

Fritigern brought most if not all of his fighters to the battle and appears to have led the force the Romans first encountered. Alatheus and Saphrax brought their cavalry into action "descending like a thunderbolt" against the Romans. These forces included Alans.

The Gothic armies were mostly infantry, with some cavalry, which was significant in the Battle of Adrianople. Some older works attribute the Gothic victory to overwhelming Gothic numbers, to Gothic cavalry, and sometimes to Gothic use of stirrups. More recent scholarly works mostly agree that the armies were similarly sized, that the Gothic infantry was more decisive than their cavalry and that neither the Romans nor the Goths used stirrups until the 6th century, probably brought by the Avars.

Ammianus records that the Roman scouts estimated 10,000 Gothic troops, but Ammianus dismissed this as an underestimate. This appears to be due to Alatheus and Saphrax's forces being away when the Roman scouts estimated the Goths' numbers before battle. Several modern historians have estimated the strength of the Gothic armies at 12,000–15,000.

Ammianus notes the important role of the Gothic cavalry. Charles Oman, believing that the cavalry were the majority of the Gothic force, interpreted the Battle of Adrianople as the beginning of the dominance of cavalry over infantry for the next thousand years. Some other historians have taken the same view. T. S. Burns and other recent historians argue that the infantry were the vast majority of the Gothic force, and that the battle had little effect on the relationship between infantry and cavalry.

Location

The battle took place within a few hours' march of the city of Adrianopolis, but its precise location is uncertain. Three possible locations of the battle have been discussed in modern historiography:

- One thesis suggests that the Gothic camp and the battleground were located to the north of Adrianopolis, west of the Tonzos river but east of Hebros river (41.81°N 26.50°E).

- Another locates the battlefield again north of the city, but east of Tonzos river, near the contemporary Turkish village of Muratçalı (41.81°N 26.60°E).

- The third thesis adopts a location east of the city, near the contemporary Turkish village of Demirhanlı (41.70°N 26.74°E), i.e. assuming that Valens was marching due East, starting from the Adrianople city walls.

Battle

On the morning of 9 August, Valens decamped from Adrianople, where he left the imperial treasury and administration under guard. The reconnaissance of the preceding days informed him of the location of the Gothic camp north of the city. Valens arrived there around noon after marching for eight miles over difficult terrain.

The Roman troops arrived tired and dehydrated, facing the Gothic camp that had been set up on the top of a hill. The Goths, except for their cavalry, defended their wagon circle, inside of which were their families and possessions. Fritigern's objective was to delay the Romans, in order to give enough time for the Gothic cavalry to return. The fields were burnt by the Goths to delay and harass the

Romans with smoke, and negotiations began for an exchange of hostages. The negotiations exasperated the Roman soldiers who seemed to hold the stronger position, but they gained precious time for Fritigern.

Some Roman units began the battle without orders to do so, believing they would have an easy victory, and perhaps over-eager to exact revenge on the Goths after two years of unchecked devastation throughout the Balkans. The imperial scholae of shield-archers under the command of the Iberian prince Bacurius attacked, but lacking support they were easily pushed back. Then the Roman left wing reached the circle of wagons, but it was too late. At that moment, the Gothic cavalry, returning from a foraging expedition, arrived to support the infantry. The cavalry surrounded the Roman troops, who were already in disarray after the failure of the first assault. The Romans retreated to the base of the hill where they were unable to maneuver, encumbered by their heavy armor and long shields. The casualties, exhaustion, and psychological pressure led to a rout of the Roman army. The cavalry continued their attack, and the killing continued until nightfall.

In the rout, the Emperor himself was abandoned by his guards. Some tried to retrieve him, but the majority of the cavalry fled. Valens' final fate is unknown; he may have died anonymously on the field. His body was never found. An alternative story circulated after the battle that Valens had escaped the field with a bodyguard and some eunuchs and hid in a peasant's cottage. The enemy attempted to pillage the cottage, apparently unaware Valens was inside. Valens' men shot arrows from the second floor to defend the cottage and in response the Goths set the cottage on fire. The bodyguard leaped out the window and told the Goths who was inside, but it was too late. Valens perished in the flames.

Aftermath

According to the historian Ammianus Marcellinus, the Goths immediately marched to the city of Adrianople and attempted to take it; Ammianus gives a detailed account of their failure. Ammianus refers to a great number of Roman soldiers who had not been let into the city and who fought the besieging Goths below the walls. A third of the Roman army succeeded in retreating, but the losses were uncountable. Many officers, among them the general Sebastianus, were killed in the worst Roman defeat since the Battle of Edessa, the low point of the Crisis of the Third Century. The battle was a crushing blow for the late Empire, resulting in the destruction of the East Roman army's core, the deaths of valuable administrators, and the destruction of nearly all armories on the Danubian provinces following the battle. The lack of reserves for the army worsened the recruitment crisis. Despite the losses, the Battle of Adrianople did not mark the end of the Roman Empire because the imperial military power was only temporarily crippled.

The defeat at Adrianople signified that the barbarians, fighting for or against the Romans, had become powerful adversaries. The Goths, though partly tamed by Valens' successor Theodosius I (who accepted them once more as allied tribes), were never expelled, exterminated, or assimilated; they remained as a distinct entity within its frontiers, for a few years allies, later semi or fully independent or often hostile.

The long-term implications of the Battle of Adrianople for the art of war are disputed. Charles Oman in 1885 wrote that the battle represented a turning point in military history, with heavy cavalry triumphing over Roman infantry and ushering in the age of the medieval knight. T. S. Burns disputed this in a 1973 book, writing that the Gothic army's cavalry arm was fairly small, that Valens would actually have had more cavalry, and that while the role of Fritigern's cavalry was critical to his victory, the battle was a mainly infantry versus infantry affair. The medieval knight was not to rise for several centuries after Adrianople.

Theodosius I and the End of the War

For the events of the Gothic War between 379 and 382, there are few sources, and accounts become more confused, especially concerning the rise of Theodosius I as the new Eastern Roman Emperor. Theodosius, born in Hispania, was the son of a successful general. As *dux Mœsiae*, he campaigned in the eastern Balkans against the Sarmatians in 374. After his father fell victim to court intrigue following the death of Western Roman Emperor Valentinian I, Theodosius decided to retire to his estates in Spain. Why he was recalled to the East is a mystery. Perhaps his military experience and the critical need for it in any new emperor played a part. It seems Theodosius regained his post as *dux Mœsiae.* He may have been campaigning against the Goths by late 378. On 19 January 379, Theodosius was made emperor. Sources are silent on how this happened. Whether Gratian initiated Theodosius' elevation himself or the surviving army in the East forced Gratian to accept Theodosius as his colleague is unknown. Whatever the cause, Gratian did acknowledge Theodosius as his co-emperor but promptly left for the West to deal with the Alemanni. Gratian offered little help to Theodosius for dealing with the Goths, outside of giving him control of the Western imperial dioceses of Dacia and Macedonia.

Theodosius set about recruiting a new army at his headquarters in Thessalonica. Farmers were drafted, and barbarian mercenaries from beyond the Danube were bought. The drafting of farmers created much resentment. Some mutilated their own thumbs, but many more hid themselves or deserted with the help of landowners, who were not pleased with losing their workers to the army. Theodosius responded with many harsh laws punishing those who hid deserters and rewarding those who turned them in. Even those who mutilated themselves were still forced into the Roman military.

Theodosius' general Modares, a Goth himself, won a minor victory against Fritigern. Even small victories such as these were massively lauded by imperial propagandists; there are records of victory celebrations equaling half that of the previous seven decades combined. Theodosius needed victories and needed to be seen as dealing with the Gothic crisis.

In 380, the Goths split. The Greuthungi went to Illyricum and invaded the Western province of Pannonia. What happened is again disputed; they were either defeated by Gratian's forces, or they peaceably signed a deal that settled them in Pannonia. The Thervings went south into Macedonia and Thessaly. Theodosius with his new army marched to meet them but, filled with unreliable barbarians and raw recruits, it melted away. The barbarian soldiers joined Fritigern, and many Romans deserted. With victory the Thervings were free to force the local Roman cities in this new region to pay them tribute.

It was then that the Western Roman Empire finally offered some help. Having ended the Gothic invasion of Pannonia, Gratian met Theodosius at Sirmium and directed his generals Arbogast and Bauto to help drive the Goths back into Thrace, which they successfully accomplished by the summer of 381. Theodosius meanwhile left for Constantinople, where he stayed. After years of war, the defeat of two Roman armies and continued stalemate, peace negotiations were opened.

Peace and Consequences

Ricomer and Saturninus conducted the negotiations for the Romans and peace was declared on 3 October 382. By then, the Gothic commanders from Adrianople were gone; Fritigern, Alatheus and Saphrax are never again mentioned in the ancient histories and their ultimate fates are unknown. Speculation ranges from death in battle to overthrown as the price for peace.

In the peace, the Romans recognized no overall leader of the Goths and the Goths were nominally incorporated into the Roman Empire. The Romans gained a military alliance with them as foederati: the Goths would be drafted into the Roman army and in special circumstances could be called upon to field full armies for the Romans. What differed from traditional Roman practice was that the Goths were given lands inside the Roman Empire itself, in the provinces of Scythia, Mœsia and possibly Macedonia, under their own authority and were not dispersed. This allowed them to stay together as a unified people with their own internal laws and cultural traditions. To seal the agreement, Theodosius threw the Goths a large feast.

Themistius, a Roman orator and imperial propagandist, while acknowledging that the Goths could not be militarily defeated, sold the peace as a victory for the Romans who had won the Goths over to their side and turned them into farmers and allies. He believed that in time the barbarian Goths would become steadfast Romans themselves like the barbarian Galatians had before them.

> *For just suppose that this destruction was an easy matter and that we possessed the means to accomplish it without suffering any consequences, although from past experience this was neither a foregone nor likely conclusion, nevertheless just suppose, as I said, that this solution lay within our power. Was it then better to fill Thrace with corpses or with farmers? To make it full of tombs or living men? To progress through a wilderness or a cultivated land? To count up the number of the slaughtered or those who till the soil? To colonize it with Phrygians and Bithynians perhaps, or to live in harmony with those we have subdued. All that [military] ingenuity of ours has proved useless; only your [Theodosius'] advice and your judgment provided an invincible resistance and the victory you won through these inner resources of yours was finer than it would have been had you prevailed by arms. For you have not destroyed those who wronged us but appropriated them. You did not punish them by seizing their land but have acquired more farmers for us. You did not slaughter them like wild beasts but charmed away their savagery just as if someone, after trapping a lion or a leopard in nets, were not to kill it but to accustom it to being a beast of burden. These fire-breathers, harder on the Romans than Hannibal was, have now come over to our side. Tame and submissive, they entrust their persons and their arms to us, whether the emperor wants to employ them as farmers or as soldiers.*

Despite these hopes, the Gothic War changed the way the Roman Empire dealt with barbarian peoples, both out of and within the imperial border. The Therving Goths would now be able to negotiate their position with Rome, with force if necessary, as a unified people inside the borders of the Empire and would transform themselves into the Visigoths. At times they would act as friends and allies to the Romans, at other times as enemies. This change in Rome's relationship with barbarians would lead to the sack of Rome in 410.

The Gothic War also affected the religion of the Empire. Valens had been an Arian Christian and his death at Adrianople helped pave the way for Theodosius to make Nicene Christianity the official form of Christianity for the Empire. The Goths, like many barbarian peoples, converted to Arianism.

ASSESSMENT AND LEGACY

"Valens was utterly undistinguished, still only a *protector*, and possessed no military ability: he betrayed his consciousness of inferiority by his nervous suspicion of plots and savage punishment of alleged traitors," writes A. H. M. Jones, a modern historian. But Jones admits that "he was a conscientious administrator, careful of the interests of the humble. Like his brother, he was an earnest Christian." According to Edward Gibbon (c. 1776–1789), Valens diminished the oppressive burden of the taxes which had been instituted by Constantine and his sons, and was humbly deferential to Valentinian's edicts of reform, as with the institution of *Defensors* (a sort of substitute for the ancient Tribunes, guardians of the lower classes). Gibbon continues that his moderation and chastity in his private life were everywhere celebrated. At the same time, continuous proscriptions and executions, originating in his weak and fearful disposition, disgraced the dozen years of his reign. "An anxious regard to his personal safety was the ruling principle of the administration of Valens", writes Gibbon. To have died in so inglorious a battle has thus come to be regarded as the nadir of an unfortunate career. This is especially true because of the profound consequences of Valens' defeat. Adrianople spelled the beginning of the end for Roman territorial integrity in the late Empire and this fact was recognized even by contemporaries. Ammianus understood that it was the worst defeat in Roman history since the Battle of Edessa, and Rufinus called it "the beginning of evils for the Roman empire then and thereafter."

Valens is also credited with the commission of a short history of the Roman State. This work, produced by Valens' secretary Eutropius, and known by the name *Breviarium ab Urbe condita*, tells the story of Rome from its founding. According to some historians, Valens was motivated by the necessity of learning Roman history, that he, the royal family, and their appointees might better mix with the Roman senatorial class.

Religious Policy

During his reign, Valens had to confront the theological diversity that was beginning to create division in the Empire. Julian (361–363), had tried to revive the pagan religions. His reactionary attempt took advantage of the dissensions among the different Christian factions, and a largely Pagan rank and file military. However, in spite of broad support, his actions were often viewed as excessive, and before he died in a campaign against the Persians, he was often treated with disdain. His death was considered a sign from the Christian God.

Valens was baptised by the Arian bishop of Constantinople before he set out on his first war against the Goths. While the Nicene Christian writers of his time identified Valens with the Arian faction and accused him of persecuting Nicene Christians, modern historians have described both Valens and Valentinian I as primarily interested in maintaining social order and have minimized their theological concerns. Although Athanasius was impelled, under his reign, to briefly go into hiding, Valens maintained a close dependency on his brother Valentinian and treated St. Basil mildly, both of whom supported the Nicene position. Not long after Valens died the cause of Arianism in the Roman East was to come to an end. His successor Theodosius I made Nicene Christianity the state religion of Rome and suppressed the Arians.

Appearance

The coin portraits of Valentinian and Valens give the faces of both emperors "heavy features", rendered with "no animation, and little consistency". Toward the end of his *Res Gestae,* Ammianus says that Valens was physically compact, dark-complected, and of average height, "knock-kneed, and somewhat pot-bellied", and had a "dimmed" pupil in one eye (the translator John C. Rolfe suggests that this is a description of a cataract).